



Social Farming for the Elderly

Module 2.2 Soft skills when working with elderly people



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Module outline

Introduction

This module will provide an understanding of soft skills and the importance of conflict management, allowing the learner to reflect on their impact when social farmers work with elderly people.

Learning objectives

- **Recognise and reflect on the importance of emotional intelligence;**
- **Identify and distinguish different types of soft skills;**
- **Recognise the importance of conflict management in social farming approach with elderly target groups;**
- **Identify personal conflict management styles;**
- **Recognise the importance to use specific strategies of cooperation/negotiation by social farmers;**
- **Adopt effective soft skills with individuals or groups of elderly people;**
- **Adopt an effective conflict resolution style, based on cooperation/negotiation;**
- **Understanding the need to apply soft skills and strategies by social farmers aimed at reducing conflict and fostering a cooperative attitude with elderly people.**



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1 Required soft skills for social farmers working with older people



What is a soft skill?



Source:
https://www.ismartrecruit.com/upload/blog/main_image/How_soft_skills_can_be_developed_at_the_workplace.jpg

“Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person’s relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person’s knowledge and occupational skills.”

(Will Kenton, 2022)

“People's abilities to communicate with each other and work well together.”

(Cambridge Business English Dictionary)

“Soft Skills represent a range of different abilities, personality traits and attributes that are often necessary for success in a particular role. They can be best described as personal traits that shape the way you work and interact with others.”

<https://www.clevvy.com/en/resources/soft-skills/what-are-soft-skills/>

Emotional Intelligence

“A person's ability to manage their feelings so that those feelings are expressed appropriately and effectively.”

(Daniel Goleman)

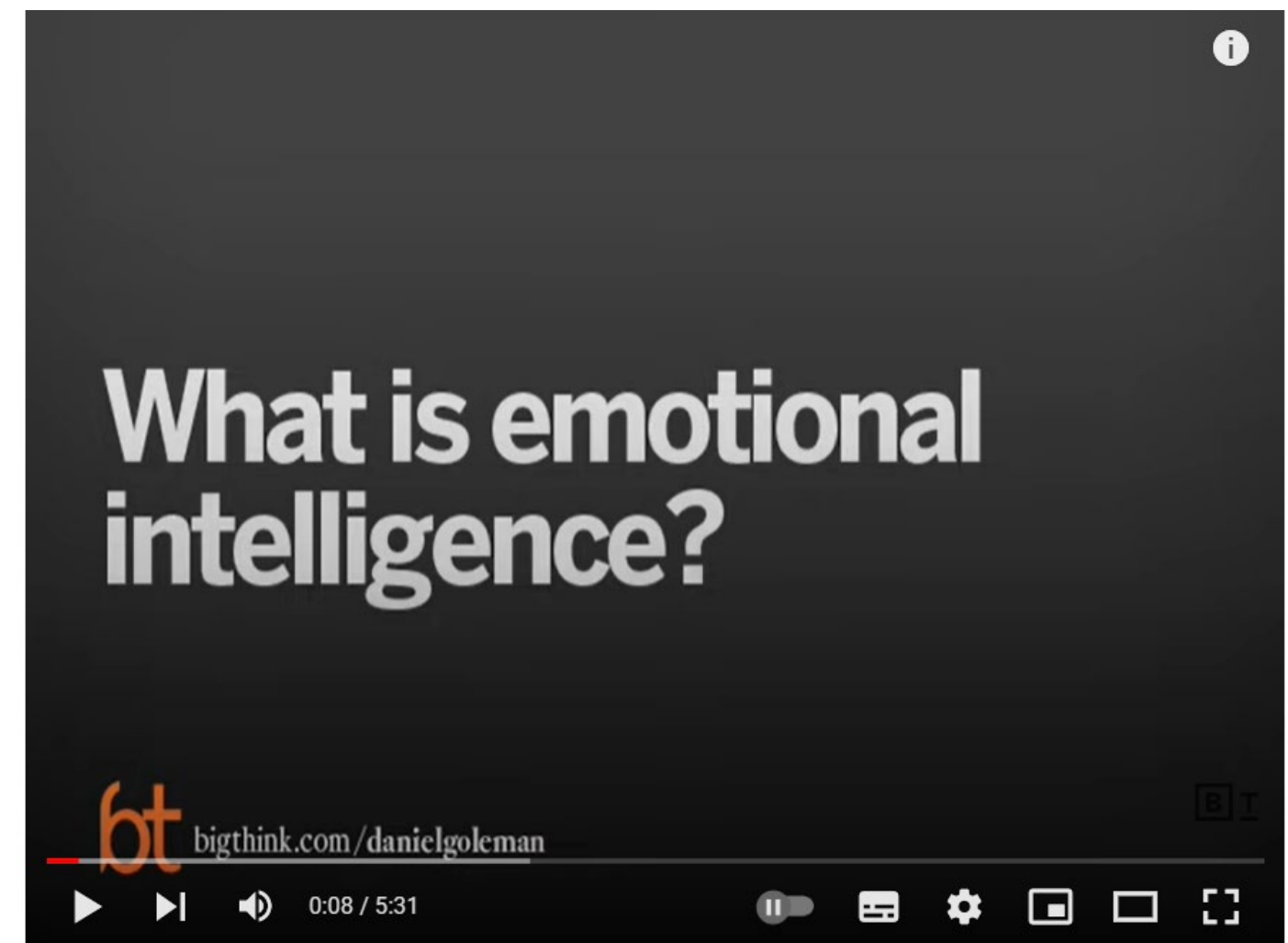
Self-awareness

Self-regulation

Motivation

Empathy

Social skills



Daniel Goleman Introduces Emotional Intelligence | Big Think

Watch [HERE](#)



Soft skills

Our personal and professional relations could be totally different if we learn how to manage our emotions and the emotions of others.

In this way, there are a set of soft skills that social farmers must consider when working with elderly people.

Communication

**Conflict
management**

**Empathy / Active
listening**

**Adaptability /
Flexibility**

Teamwork



Communication skills

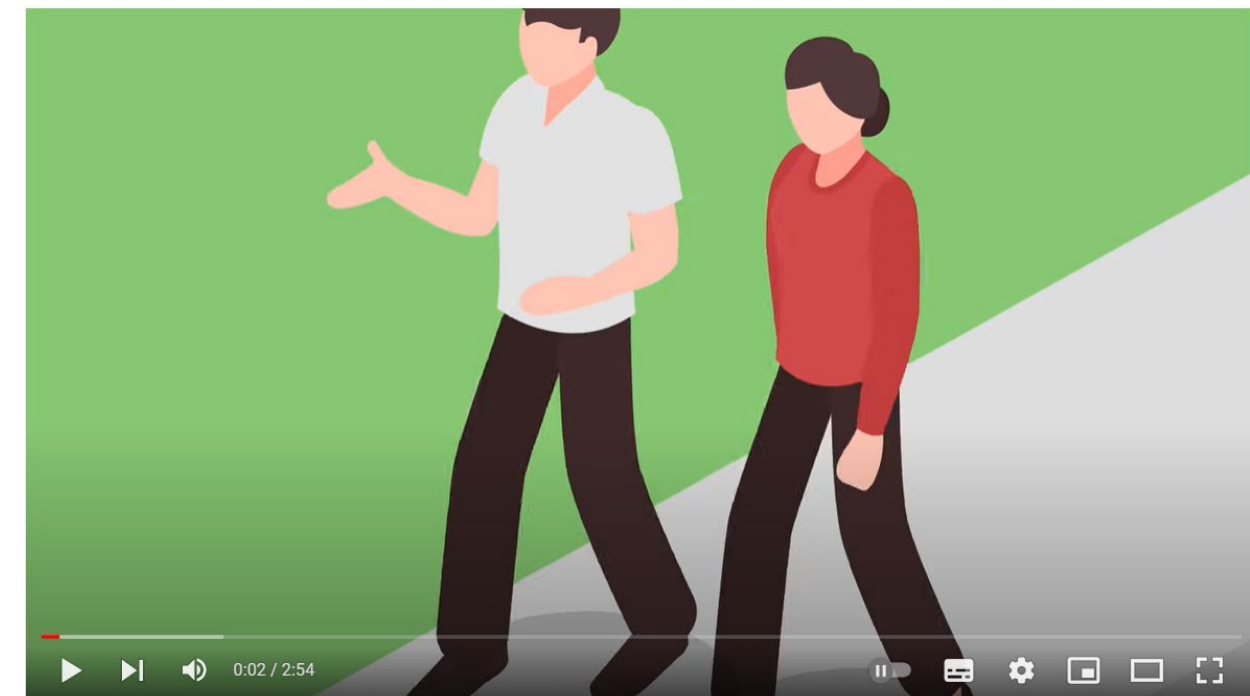
The social farmer should:

- Be a good listener, practicing active listening;
- Pay attention to what the elderly are saying;
- Rephrase what they say, when clarification is needed;
- Get straight to the point and be clear in the communication process;
- Use eye contact when communicating with the elderly;
- Respect others' opinions and try to understand their point of view.



Source:

[https://www.thebalancemoney.com/thmb/mp-WRJBs_fry0YhoayDf9fc4dFM=/1500x0/filters:no_upscale\(\):max_bytes\(150000\):strip_icc\(\)/communication-skills-list-2063779_FINAL1-5b60d4a9c9e77c00251d3de9.png](https://www.thebalancemoney.com/thmb/mp-WRJBs_fry0YhoayDf9fc4dFM=/1500x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc()/communication-skills-list-2063779_FINAL1-5b60d4a9c9e77c00251d3de9.png)



Communicating with Older Adults

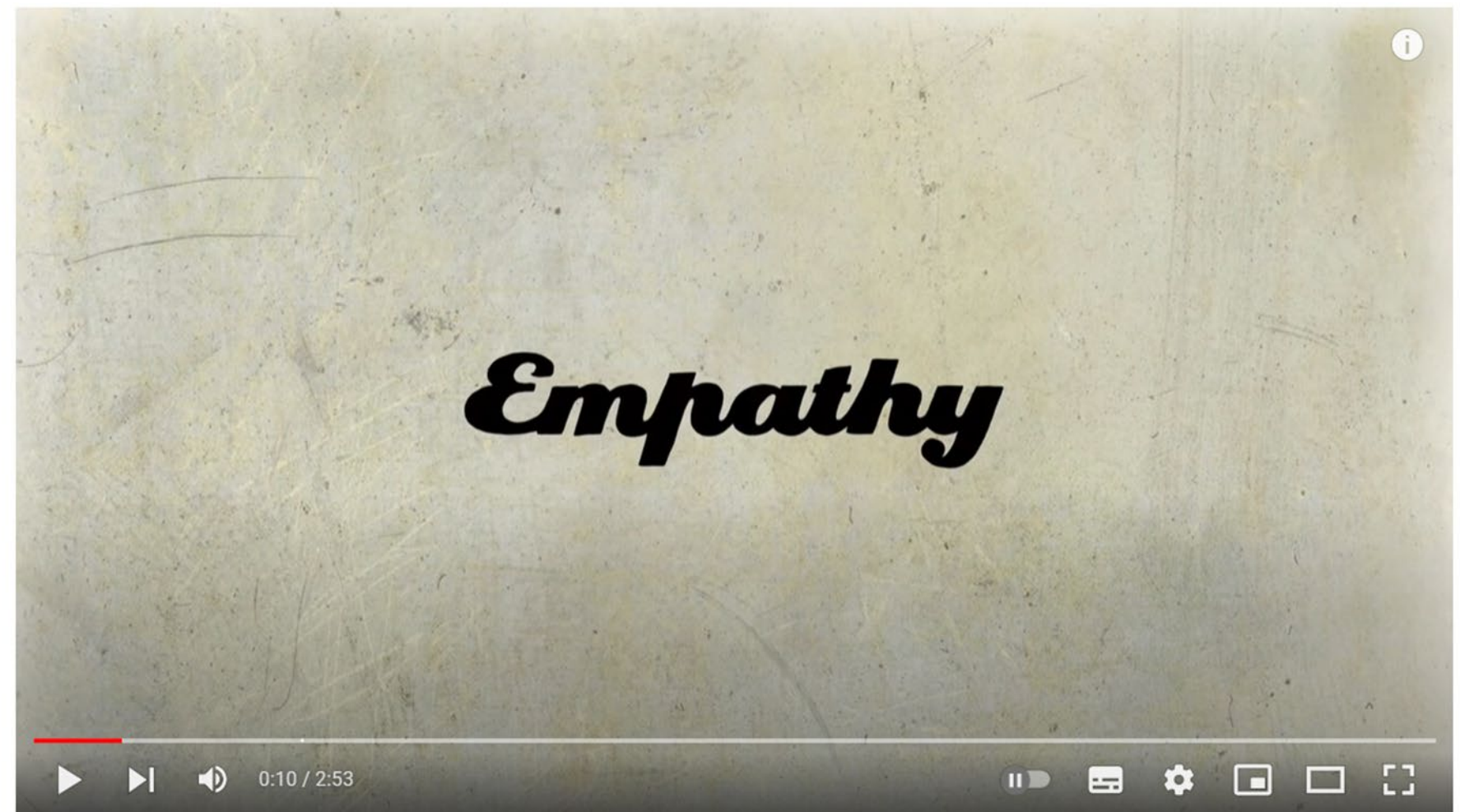
Watch [HERE](#)



Empathy / Active listening

The social farmer should:

- Look at who is speaking;
- Say "yes" and nod so the other person realizes that he/she is being heard;
- Do not interrupt;
- Understand the other's point of view before replying or giving an opinion;
- Ask questions when in doubt;
- Explore the strength of silence.



Brené Brown on Empathy

Watch [HERE](#)

Adaptability/Flexibility

The social farmer should:

- Try new things, in different ways, to help the elderly
- Handle changes in a positive way to reduce stress
- Have the ability to solve problems and unexpected events
- Plan the work on the farm, but have alternative options.

Credit: Jevtic



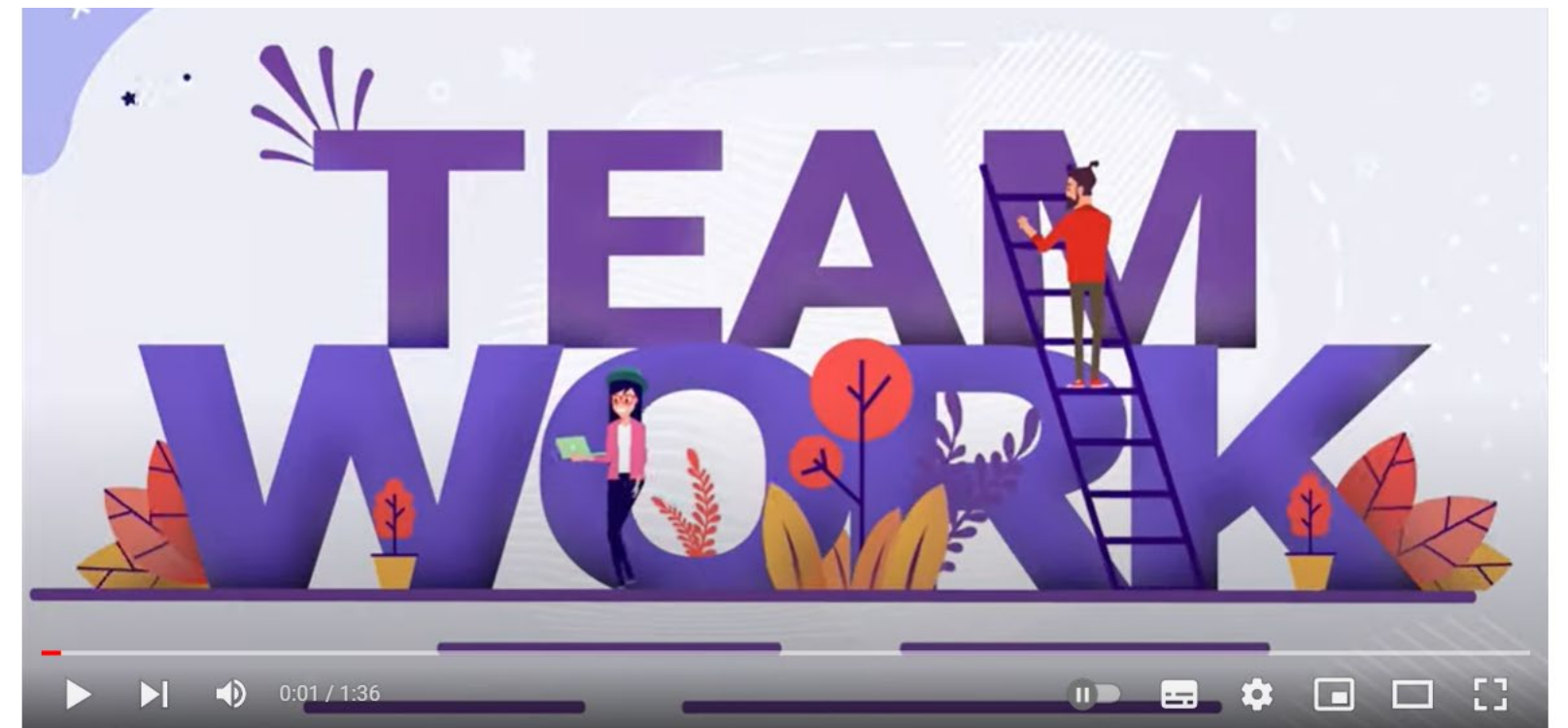
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Teamwork

The social farmer should:

- Agree clear goals with the elderly, so they can understand and be committed with them;
- Be supportive so that the elderly feel free to say what they think and take risks;
- Promote learning from experience;
- Develop and maintain good relationships with the elderly;
- Lead and motivate them.



5 Tips For Effective Teamwork

Watch [HERE](#)



Conflict management

Positive conflict management may be associated with different behaviours and strategies

Conflicts must be dealt with openly and managed effectively. It is necessary to

- ✓ Diagnose the nature of the conflict;
- ✓ Engage in the approach;
- ✓ Listen actively;
- ✓ Solve the problem.

Some examples:

- Disagree respectfully with someone;
- Know when to slow things down and think about something before speaking.





2 Facilitate good governance and conflict management



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Personal styles in conflict management

Avoidance

**Accommodation /
Conformism**

**Constructive
Confrontation**

Competition

Commitment

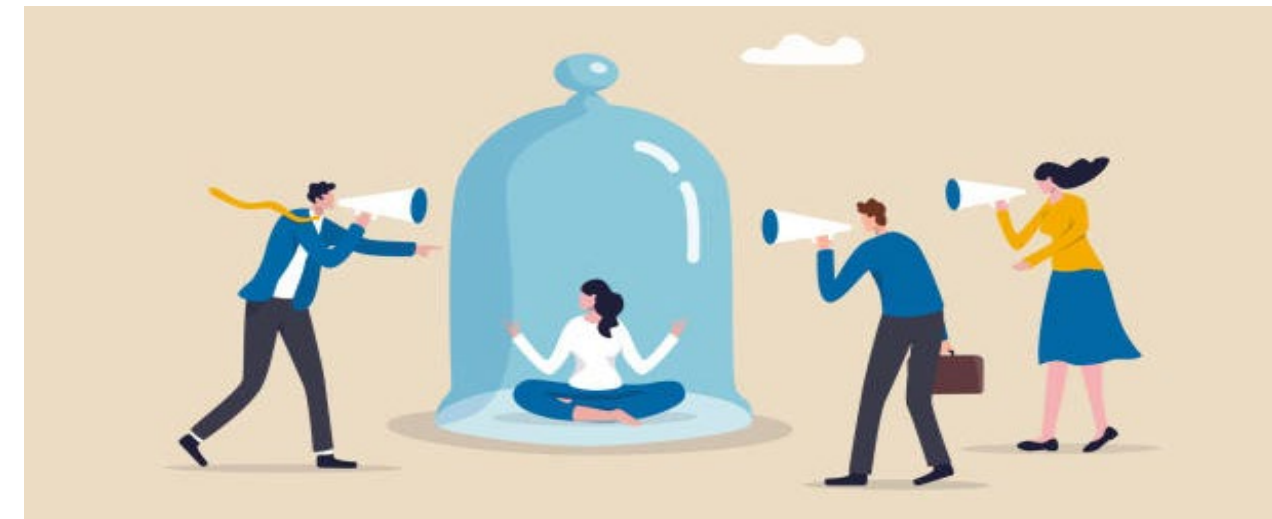
**Cooperation /
Negotiation**



Avoidance

Main characteristics:

- **Passive (non-assertive) approach, of non-cooperation.**
- **To back off from facing a real or potential conflict situation.**
- **To ignore, deny or flee from the conflict, not contacting others or confronting their interests.**
- **To put the problems on hold.**
- **Used when: the subject is not important; there is no prospect of winning the conflict; whether you need time to obtain information or when the conflict may be disadvantageous.**



Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com/pt/ilustra%C3%A7%C3%B5es/conflict-avoidance>

Main effects:

- **It doesn't solve the problem.**
- **It doesn't deal with the real cause of the problem.**
- **Let others solve the conflict, or over time it is forgotten, or it returns stronger.**

Accommodation / Conformism

Main characteristics:

- **Passive (not assertive), but cooperative approach.**
- **Emphasize points of agreement rather than points of disagreement.**
- **One part tends to give in and appease the situation, even putting the other part's needs and interests above its own.**
- **It solves the minor points of disagreement, leaving the bigger problems for later.**



Main effects:

- **It only provides a short-term solution (calms the conflict).**
- **It does not deal with the real cause of the problem.**
- **It maintains a favourable climate for cooperation.**



Constructive confrontation

Main characteristics:

- It deals with the conflict through a frontal approach.
- It deals with the conflict as a problem to be solved, examining alternatives.
- It requires a “give and take” attitude, as well as an open dialogue.



Source: <https://www.boundaries.me/confront>

Main effects:

It provides a definitive, win-win solution.



Competition

Main characteristics:

- A non-cooperative, more aggressive and authoritarian approach, in which the person defends his/her interests while neglecting those of others and their impact.
- Domination attitude (it uses power games and forces submission).
- Used when there is a need to make a quick or unpopular decision.
- One part wins at the expense of the other. It offers only win-lose situations.



Source: <https://www.hcamag.com/au/news/opinion-and-best-practice/reaping-the-rewards-of-workplace-competition/171188>

Main effects:

- It can create resentments that surface later.
- It does not deal with the real cause of the conflict.
- It can lead the other part to accept the blame for any problem.



Commitment

Main characteristics:

- **It's a mixture of assertiveness and cooperation.**
- **It seeks to negotiate solutions that bring some degree of satisfaction to all parts involved.**
- **One part gives up on some points or items.**
- **Generally used in labour disputes (exclusive goals).**
- **Useful when there is a need to achieve temporary solutions for complex issues.**



Source: https://stock.adobe.com/pt/search?k=commitment&asset_id=376890158

Main effects:

- **It provides a compromise solution, which may not satisfy anyone.**
- **Distribution of results between both parts (partial satisfaction).**
- **It can cause some additional problems (each part gives up something).**



Cooperation / Negotiation

Main characteristics:

- **Assertive and cooperative approach.**
- **It incorporates different points of view and different interests, looks at the problem from different perspectives and tries to reconcile differences and solve the conflict.**
- **It contemplates the needs and interests of both parties, leading to consensus, understanding and commitment.**
- **It sees conflict as a challenge and chooses open communication.**



Source: <https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/concept-teamwork-cooperation-partne-vector-27016095>

Main effects:

- **Provides a beneficial or acceptable result for both parts, minimizing losses for all.**
- **Provides a long-term win-win solution.**



Cooperation / Negotiation

Negotiation is the personal style of conflict management that appears often associated with more satisfactory results.

In this way, the use of specific techniques and strategies of conflict resolution by social farmers may lead to a cooperative attitude in others (e.g. elderly people), enhancing partnership work.



Source: https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/outras-informacoes/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14945





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